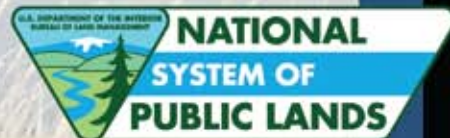


The BLM's Proposed Fiscal Year 2010 Budget

**"As we develop
the energy and
resources on our
public lands, we
must do so with
an eye to future
generations and
an ear to local
communities."**

**- Interior Secretary
Ken Salazar**

May 7, 2009



Protecting Resources and Managing Uses of Public Lands

The Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, administers more land—256 million surface acres—than any other Federal agency. The BLM also manages 700 million acres of subsurface mineral estate across the nation. In accordance with the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Bureau carries out a multiple-use mission as the steward of these public lands, which are located primarily in 12 Western States, including Alaska.

To fulfill its challenging mission, the BLM, with a workforce of about 10,000 full-time employees, works in cooperation with a host of partners: States, tribes, counties, local communities, government agencies, private organizations, businesses, and individuals. By taking this collaborative approach, the BLM—which prides itself on being a “can-do” agency—promotes the health and productivity of the public lands and serves the needs of those who use or care about these lands.

The President’s fiscal year 2010 budget request for the BLM is \$1,148,657,000 in new budget authority, a net increase of \$110,061,000 from the 2009 funding level. Under this proposed budget, the BLM will focus on the following priorities:

- Creating a New Energy Frontier
- Tackling Climate Impacts
- Protecting America’s Treasured Landscapes
- Creating a 21st Century Youth Conservation Corps

Creating a New Energy Frontier

The Department of the Interior and the BLM will help build a clean energy future that addresses goals related to national security, environmental security, and economic growth through the development of renewable energy on the public lands. The President’s New Energy for America plan sets a target of ensuring that 10 percent of U.S. electricity is generated from renewable sources by 2012, rising to 25 percent by 2025. Renewable energy projects on BLM-managed lands will include wind, solar, geothermal, and biomass projects and the siting of transmission infrastructure to support this development.

The President’s FY 2010 budget request includes a **\$16.1 million increase** in support of renewable energy work. The proposed budget supports the BLM’s Renewable Energy Coordination Offices (RECOs) and renewable energy staff at other offices, which will enable the Bureau to streamline the review and approval of renewable energy projects. The RECOs consist of teams of multidisciplinary staff, based in existing BLM offices, that will focus on processing renewable energy applications and conducting analyses under the National Environmental



Kramer Junction solar farm, Barstow Field Office in California.

Policy Act to ensure proper integration of renewable energy into the BLM landscape.

In addition to promoting renewable energy, the BLM will play a key role in moving America toward energy independence by providing opportunities for responsible oil and gas development on the public lands. The BLM, which already supplies 14 percent of the nation’s natural gas and 5 percent of its oil, will continue to provide high levels of customer service in processing applications for permits to drill on public lands in FY 2010. In so doing, the BLM will ensure that oil and gas activities are conducted in an environmentally sound manner. In addition, the Interior Department is initiating a comprehensive review of onshore oil and gas leasing and royalty policies to ensure that companies are diligently developing their oil and gas leases and that the American people are receiving a fair return for the development of Federal resources.



The federally protected California condor continues to flourish

Tackling Climate Impacts

Climate change is affecting the landscapes that the BLM manages across the West. At the ecoregional level, native plant and animal communities are experiencing impacts from temperature and precipitation changes. These changes are increasing the threat of wildfire, fostering the spread of invasive weeds, and forcing some populations to change historic habitat range because of environmental stress. At the geopolitical level, the availability of water for drinking, irrigation, industry, and livestock is also changing, generating conflict between communities over access to limited water supplies and creating long-term storage and delivery challenges.

Over the last decade, a variety of Federal, State, tribal, and nongovernmental organizations have begun preparing ecoregional assessments and developing adaptive management strategies, as well as pooling resources to fund on-the-



Wildflowers in Vermilion Cliffs National Monument in Arizona.

ground work. To build on these experiences, the Bureau seeks to create the institutional infrastructure needed to monitor, assess, predict, and adapt to landscape-scale changes. The FY 2010 budget request includes a **\$15 million increase** in support of this type of work.

Given that climate change effects do not respect political boundaries, many BLM activities responding to these effects will take place at an ecoregional level. Within priority ecoregions, much of the work will directly benefit BLM lands within the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), a 27-million-acre public land network that encompasses wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, national monuments, and many of the most spectacular lands managed by the BLM. Within the framework of the Bureau's multiple-use mission, the Administration's focus on climate change monitoring and adaptive management will help ensure that these special lands are protected and used productively as repositories for native seeds, habitat for wildlife, and areas for research.

Protecting America's Treasured Landscapes

BLM-managed lands are valued for their myriad uses and resources,



Dominguez Canyon Wilderness Area offers excellent opportunities for hiking in Colorado.

including the habitat they provide for a wide variety of plant and animal species, of which more than 305 are listed under Federal law as rare, threatened, or endangered. In fact, the vast acreages and remote areas under BLM management offer havens for many species that no longer exist on private lands. The Bureau's ongoing efforts to maintain or restore landscapes are critical for sustaining the uniquely American plant and animal species that are a vital part of this nation's natural heritage.

The NLCS comprises specific areas of BLM-managed lands that are designated by Acts of Congress or Presidential proclamations to be specially managed for their outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values while allowing for appropriate uses of the land. The NLCS conserves, protects, and restores these landscapes, which include 38 national monuments, national conservation areas, and similarly designated areas; 224 wilderness areas and 545 wilderness study areas; 63 wild and scenic rivers (totaling 2,415 miles); and 15 national historic and scenic trails (totaling 6,006 miles). The President's budget calls for a **\$10.2 million increase** in NLCS-related land-acquisition funding.

Wild horses and burros roam some of these treasured landscapes in the West. More than 33,000 of these icons of America's Western heritage live on BLM-managed lands in 10 Western States. Given that wild horses and burros have virtually no natural predators and because their herd sizes can double every 4 years, the BLM must remove thousands of animals from the range each year and place them in holding facilities to keep herd levels consistent with the land's carrying capacity. The BLM is working to reach the ideal range population level of approximately 27,300 animals. This level—known as the appropriate management level (AML)—is the



Approximately 44,000 acres in the eastern portion of the Boise foothills were identified by the BLM as a project area to minimize the effects of wildland fires and improve wildlife habitat.

point at which healthy herds can thrive in ecological balance with other public rangeland uses and resources. When wild horse and burro numbers exceed the AML, this imbalance results in overgrazing of forage, increased soil erosion, reduced water quality, expansion of invasive species, and negative impacts to habitat for wildlife, plants, and fish.

Although the BLM attempts to place as many animals as possible from holding facilities into private care through public adoptions or sales, adoptions have been declining sharply in recent years because of higher fuel and feed costs. (Adoptions fell from 5,701 in FY 2005 to 3,706 in FY 2008.) In addition, the BLM's direct sales program, which primarily affects older animals, has met with limited success as currently implemented. As a result, there are nearly 32,000 animals in short-term (corral) and long-term (pasture) facilities. While

the BLM applies a birth-control vaccine to mares as part of an ongoing study, there are logistical problems in applying the drug, which has not yet proven effective. These various factors have combined to drive up the BLM's holding costs, which accounted for three-fourths of the agency's enacted funding level of \$36.2 million for the wild horse and burro program in FY 2008. To address its escalating holding costs, as well as support healthy rangelands by making progress toward the AML, the BLM is requesting a **\$26.5 million funding increase** for wild horse and burro management in FY 2010.



FIRE (Field Inquiry Research Experience) Up is a summer course for high school students to help them learn about wildfire behavior.

Creating a 21st Century Youth Conservation Corps

As the BLM's workforce ages and retires, natural resource professionals will be needed to fill vacancies in a variety of disciplines. To make sure that the right skill sets are in place for the 21st century, the BLM recognizes that future employees must be developed and nurtured over time. The initial childhood wonder about the natural world must be sustained through hands-on experiences during the school-age years and enriched through long-term engagement and stewardship. Secretary Salazar's 21st Century Youth Conservation Corps is a continuum of national- and field-level programs that do just that. The **\$5 million funding increase** requested for this initiative will enhance programs promoting lifelong connections with nature that benefit youth, the BLM, and the nation.